

WHY COMMON CORE IS NOT GOOD FOR MONTANA

1. Common Core requires 70% nonfiction to be taught in English classes and only 30% fiction. This strips our English classes of many beloved classics such as Shakespeare. Suggested non-fiction readings include executive orders on global warming and magazine articles on President Obama's healthcare program.
2. Common Core is stripping our reading classes of reading skill teaching, which is vital to learn how to read and comprehend.
3. Math classes will have two digit addition and subtraction put off for two years while students struggle to explain why $2+2=4$. Many mathematicians have written papers on the folly of this approach.
4. Common Core teaching strategies are sixties free school style open concept learning, projects and collaboration. These are failed teaching strategies. Direct instruction as in Engelmann's Distar series or as used in the very successful Kipp Academies is what has been proven to be successful.
5. Common Core has had no trials and is a huge experiment with our children's education. What's the hurry?
6. Common Core was written by Achieve whose president is Mike Cohen, former assistant secretary of education under Bill Clinton. Mike was instrumental in writing Goals 2000, which had the same claims (higher level thinking strategies and college and career ready etc.) as Common Core has. That program failed and is now being replaced with the same teaching strategies.
7. Common Core is Federally promoted and funded and as mentioned above was written essentially by the Federal Department of Education. Common Core is not promoting states rights; it is taking them away and replacing them with a national curriculum.
8. If Republicans support this program they will be labeled with the blame for failing schools.
9. The cost of Common Core will ultimately bankrupt our local school districts as it is doing in California.
10. Common Core will cause teachers to teach to the Smarter Balanced Assessment tests giving full control over what is taught to these testing companies rather than to teachers and school districts.

Barbara Rush (Education Lady) e-mail Rush720@gmail.com

THE COMMON CORE NATIONAL CURRICULUM IS BAD FOR AMERICA

"Is this what we want for America - central planners that transform our lives Without a vote or a public vetting or any sort of amendment process to alter a Common Core as improvements needs to be made?" Christel Swasey

Two years ago at a meeting at the Montana Club Denise Juneau, Montana Superintendent of Education, told attendees that school testing was going to go all federal "like the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) test". How did she know that if this was a "states initiative"? The Common Core National Curriculum has been in the works by the Federal Department of Education for a long time. Common Core is a flawed program written by federal bureaucrats. Christel Swasey summed it all up when she said " Is this what we want for America- central planners that transform our lives without a vote or a public vetting or any sort of amendment process to alter a Common Core as improvements need to be made?" In Montana our Board of Public Education approved Common Core without offering any public hearings.

Who wrote Common Core? Was it Jeb Bush or Condoleezza Rice? NO. Was it the National Governors Association or the Council of Chief State School Officers? NO. Common Core was written by an organization called Achieve. Who's the president of Achieve? Michael Cohen is the president of Achieve. Who is Michael Cohen? Michael Cohen's former job before moving to Achieve was Assistant Secretary of Education under Bill Clinton. That's right, he came right from the Federal Department of Education. He took other bureaucrats with him from the Federal Department of Education and with a forty five million dollar grant from Bill Gates, he wrote Common Core. Does Michael Cohen have any teaching experience? NO. Common Core is a national curriculum written by federal bureaucrats and supported by federal dollars and the Obama administration. This is a program that has not been researched or tried and vetted, and is a huge experiment with our children. Do national curriculums work? NO. China has a national curriculum- we have had no Nobel Laureates from China. Many countries that score worse than the United States on academic testing have national curriculums.

In America our freedom comes to us through divided government. Each part of the government- federal, state, county, city and school board has their own authority. As state legislators you should not be voting on curriculums, neither should the Federal Government be writing them. Our schools, school boards, and teachers should be responsible for choosing good curriculums from curriculum companies whose business it is to write curriculum. In a free market bad curriculums will fall by the wayside.

Bureaucratic central planning brings bureaucratic corruption. Bill Gates of Microsoft, who stands to make billions off of the Common Core enterprise, now and into the future, has invested hundreds of millions to see it become a reality. He has

paid off every organization involved in schools from the P.T.A. to the Unions and then gave three million dollars to the Fordham Foundation to get them on board. Money talks. He then held workshops across the country to convince legislators.

David Coleman known as the "architect" of Common Core, left McGraw Hill, a textbook publishing company, to establish GROW, the organization that developed the online testing for Common Core. David sold GROW back to McGraw Hill for millions and now has gotten himself appointed as the president of the SAT (Scholastic Achievement Test) board which will determine which children all across America can go to college. David wants open-ended questions based on collaborative projects, given on computers. Our children will essentially be subjectively evaluated by low paid untrained individuals to determine if they are fit for college as computers do not have the ability to grade open ended assessments. Is David Coleman a teacher of any sort or has he ever worked in schools? NO.

A National Curriculum has been the goal of central planners in this country for a hundred years. This dream coming to fruition is a nightmare for our schools and for America. Are you all familiar with the city of Detroit? Our Federal Government in its Model Cities Program targeted it in the 70's. Today Detroit is a burnt out shell. Christopher Loehse from the State Chief School Officers Association can show you a chart showing that our schools in the United States were making steady progress from the 1950's to the 1970's and have flat lined or deteriorated since the Federal Government established the Federal Department of Education.

Many states such as Alaska and Texas are choosing freedom over Common Core. Indiana, whose State Superintendent of Education just lost his election in a landslide over the Common Core issue, is trying to reverse course and has two senators backing legislation to get Indiana out of Common Core. Montana has the opportunity to keep its freedom and control over public education. If there is anything so wonderful in Common Core they can pick and choose what they want after the program has been tried and vetted. That's the beauty of freedom in Markets and Schools- things are tested and tried and the bad get discarded and the good rise to the top.

Common Core has many lofty claims such as that it will teach research, collaboration, higher level thinking skills, and critical thinking. Goals 2000 had these same claims 20 years ago. If it succeeded why would we need a new program with the same goals? The truth is that a lot of money was spent and the goals were not achieved. Children will be able to collaborate, think critically and do research when they have the knowledge and discipline to achieve these goals. Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers and the astronauts who brought home Apollo 13 did not need a national curriculum to teach them how to think, research or collaborate. They had knowledge, integrity and discipline that are not taught in the Common Core open concept project centered type curriculum.

Common Core is replete with bad programs. From open concept learning, which does not allow children a quiet environment to concentrate in, to project learning, which encourages groupthink rather than independent thought and often leaves one or two students doing the work while other children learn nothing. Common Core's math program will put off teaching basic skills for years while youngsters are supposedly being taught "why" $2+2 = 4$. Mathematicians realize that young children develop these kinds of understandings over time as their brains mature and they have written papers to this effect.

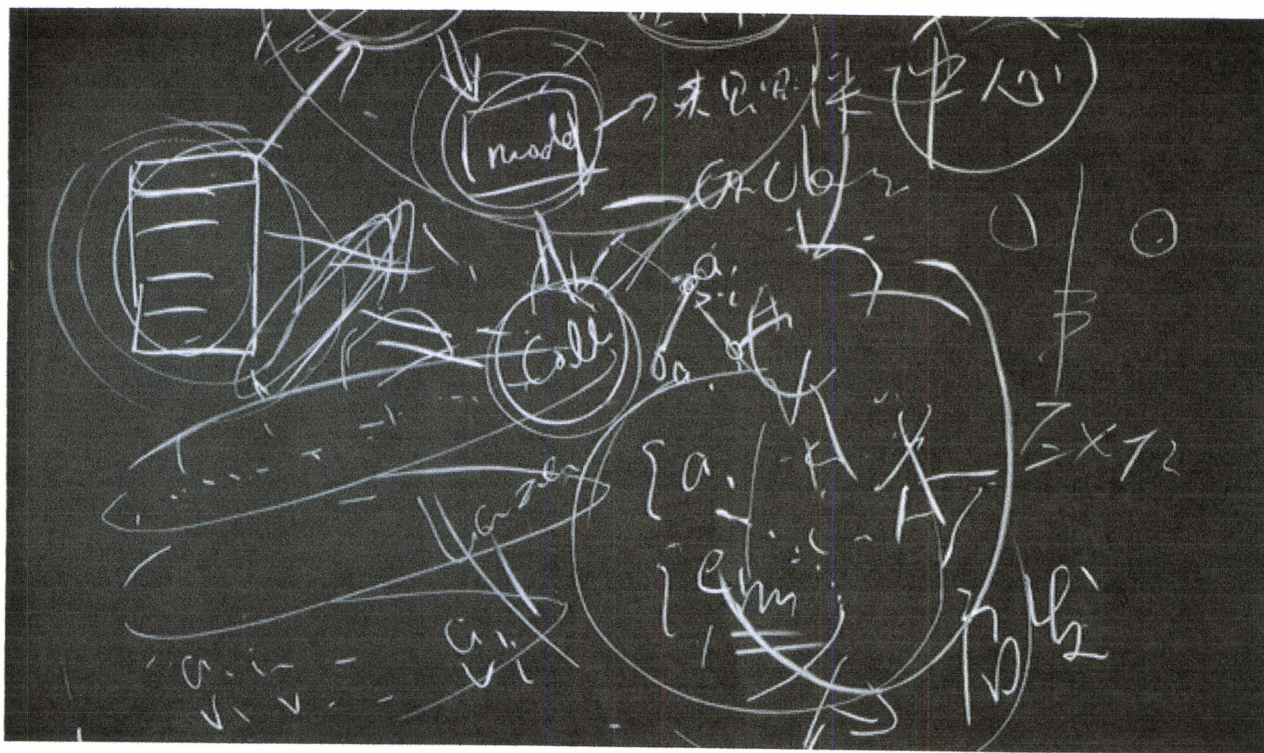
PHD's in literacy will tell you that the Common Core Curriculum does not understand the connection between reading and writing, or the difference between understanding narrative and informational text. Under Common Core many of our classics will be lost as English teachers are forced to teach 70% non-fiction material- suggested readings include President Obama's executive orders on global warming. The Common Core Literacy Program requires science and social studies teachers to teach reading. This sounds like dumbing down to me, as students are no longer expected to be able to read the textbook on their own.

As responsible legislators you should stop Common Core in Montana. Stop this huge experiment with our children's education and scarce education dollars. Choose freedom over central planning.

Thank you for your time. Barbara Rush (Education Lady) rush720@gmail.com

[f Recommend](#) 277 [g +1](#) 7 [t Tweet](#) 93 [in Share](#) 2 Nov 20 2012, 12:03 PM ET [54](#)

A set of guidelines adopted by 45 states this year may turn children into "little mathematicians" who don't know how to do actual math.



zhu difeng/shutterstock

A few weeks ago, I wrote [an article](#) for TheAtlantic.com describing some of the problems with how math is currently being taught. Specifically, some math programs strive to teach students to think like "little mathematicians" before giving them the analytic tools they need to actually solve problems.

Some of us had hoped the situation would improve this school year, as 45 states and the District Columbia adopted the new Common Core Standards. But here are two discouraging emails I received recently. The first was from a parent:

They implemented Common Core this year in our school system in Tennessee. I have a third grader who loved math and got A's in math until this year, where he struggles to get a C. He struggles with "explaining" how he got his answer after using "mental math." In fact, I had no idea how to explain it! It's math $2+2=4$. I can't explain it, it just is.

The second email came from a teacher in another state:

I am teaching the traditional algorithm this year to my third graders, but was told next year with Common Core I will not be allowed to. They should use mental math, and other strategies, to add. Crazy! I am so outraged that I have decided my child is NOT going to public schools until Common Core falls flat.

So just what are the Common Core Standards for math? They are a set of guidelines written for both math

struggles with "explaining" how he got his answer after using "mental math." In fact, I had no idea how to explain it! It's math $2+2=4$. I can't explain it, it just is.

The second email came from a teacher in another state:

I am teaching the traditional algorithm this year to my third graders, but was told next year with Common Core I will not be allowed to. They should use mental math, and other strategies, to add. Crazy! I am so outraged that I have decided my child is NOT going to public schools until Common Core fails flat.

So just what are the Common Core Standards for math? They are a set of guidelines written for both math and English language arts under the auspices of National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Where they are adopted, the Common Core standards will replace state standards in these subject areas, establishing more common ground for schools nationwide.

To read newspaper coverage of the new standards, you'd think they were raising the bar for math proficiency, not lowering it. "More is expected of the students," [one article](#) declares. "While they still have to memorize or have fluency in key math functions and do the math with speed and accuracy, they will have to demonstrate a deeper understanding of key concepts before moving on."

But what does this mean in practice? Another [recent article](#) explains, "This curriculum puts an emphasis on critical thinking, rather than memorization, and collaborative learning." In other words, instead of simply teaching multiplication tables, schools are adopting "an 'inquiry method' of learning, in which children are supposed to discover the knowledge for themselves." An educator quoted in the article admits that this approach could be frustrating for students: "Yes. Solving a problem is not easy. Learning is not easy."

With 100 pages of explicit instruction about what should be taught and when, one would expect the Common Core Standards to make problem-solving easier. Instead, one father quoted in the aforementioned article complains, "For the first time, I have three children who are struggling in math." Why?

Let's look first at the 97 pages of what are called "Content Standards." Many of these standards require that students to be able to explain why a particular procedure works. It's not enough for a student to be able to divide one fraction by another. He or she must also "use the relationship between multiplication and division to explain that $(2/3) \div (3/4) = 8/9$, because $3/4$ of $8/9$ is $2/3$."

It's an odd pedagogical agenda, based on a belief that conceptual understanding must come before practical skills can be mastered. As this thinking goes, students must be able to explain the "why" of a procedure. Otherwise, solving a math problem becomes a "mere calculation" and the student is viewed as not having true understanding.

This approach not only complicates the simplest of math problems; it also leads to delays. Under the Common Core Standards, students will not learn traditional methods of adding and subtracting double and triple digit numbers until fourth grade. (Currently, most schools teach these skills two years earlier.) The standard method for two and three digit multiplication is delayed until fifth grade; the standard method for long division until sixth. In the meantime, the students learn alternative strategies that are far less efficient, but that presumably help them "understand" the conceptual underpinnings.

This brings us now to the final three pages of the 100-page document, called "[Standards for Mathematical Practice](#)." While this discussion is short, the points it includes are often the focus of webinars and seminars on the new Common Core methods:

1. Make sense of problem solving and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

These guidelines seem reasonable enough. But on closer inspection, these things are essentially habits of mind that ought to develop naturally as a student learns to do actual math. For example, there's nothing wrong with the first point: "Make sense of problem solving and persevering in solving them." But these standards are being interpreted to mean that students "make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt. They consider analogous problems, and try special cases and simpler forms of the original problem in order to gain insight

This is a rather high expectation for students in K- 6. True habits of mind develop with time and maturity. An algebra student, for instance, can take a theoretical scenario such as "John is 2 times as old as Jill will be in 3 years" and express it in mathematical symbols. In lower grades, this kind of connection between numbers and ideas is very hard to make. The Common Core standards seem to presume that even very young students can, and should, learn to make sophisticated leaps in reasoning, like little children dressing in their parents' clothes.

As the Common Core makes its way into real-life classrooms, I hope teachers are able to adjust its guidelines as they fit. I hope, for instance, that teachers will still be allowed to introduce the standard method for addition and subtraction in second grade rather than waiting until fourth. I also hope that teachers who favor direct instruction over an inquiry-based approach will be given this freedom.

Unfortunately, the emails and newspaper articles I've been seeing may herald a new era where more and more students are given a flimsy make-believe version of mathematics, without the ability to solve actual math problems. After all, where the Common Core goes, textbook publishers are probably not too far behind.

[Share](#)[Email](#) [Print](#)

Presented by



More at The Atlantic

[Ted Cruz Doesn't Think Conservatism Lost the Election](#)[The Meme Election and the Tumblr Campaign](#)['Killing Them Softly': Stylish, Insubstantial](#)[Exercising With a Fitter Partner Improves Your Performance](#)[The Case for Drinking the Coffee You Crave](#)

INDIANA POLICY



REVIEW

[Home](#)
[The Journal](#)
[Indiana Writers Group](#)
[Join Us](#)
[Search](#)
[About Us](#)
[Contact Us](#)

Common Core Standards: Which Way for Indiana?

December 26, 2012

by SANDRA STOTSKY, Ph.D.

The defeat of Tony Bennett as Indiana's State Superintendent of Education was attributed to many factors. Yet, as [one post-election analysis](#) indicated, the size of the vote for his rival, Glenda Ritz, suggests that the most likely reason was Mr. Bennett's support for, and attempt to implement, [Common Core's](#) badly flawed standards.



Common Core's English language arts standards don't have just one fatal flaw, *i.e.*, its arbitrary division of reading standards into two groups: 10 standards for "informational" text and nine for "literature" at all grade levels from K to 12. That's only the most visible; its writing standards turn out to be just as damaging, constituting an intellectual impossibility for the average middle-grade student — and for reasons I hadn't suspected. The architects of Common Core's writing standards simply didn't link them to appropriate reading standards, a symbiotic relationship well-known to reading researchers. Last month I had an opportunity to see the results of teachers' attempts to address Common Core's writing standards at an event put on by GothamSchools, a four-year-old news organization trying to provide an independent news service to the New York City schools.

The teachers who had been selected to display their students' writing (based on an application) provided visible evidence of their efforts to help their students address Common Core's writing standards — detailed teacher-made or commercial worksheets structuring the composing of an argument. And it was clear that their students had tried to figure out how to make a "claim" and show "evidence" for it. But the problems they were having were not a reflection of their teachers' skills or their own reading and writing skills. The source of their conceptual problems could be traced to the standards themselves.

At first glance the standards don't leap out as a problem. Take, for example, Common Core's first writing standard for grades six, seven and eight (almost identical across grades): "Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence." This goal undoubtedly sounds reasonable to adults, who have a much better idea of what "claims" are, what "relevant evidence" is and even what an academic "argument" is. But most children have a limited understanding of this meta-language for the structure of a composition.

So I explored Common Core's standards for reading informational text in grades three, four and five (and then in grades six, seven and eight) and discovered *nothing* on what a claim or an argument is, or on distinguishing relevant from irrelevant evidence. In other words, the grades six, seven and eight writing standards are *not* coordinated with reading standards in grades three to eight that would require children to read the genre of writing their middle-

Our Site

Full use of this site, including access to the search function and the archive of past articles and journals, is available only to paid members. Not registered? [Join now!](#)

Credentialed media and academics may request complimentary access by writing the director at director@inpolicy.org.

Login

Username

Password

☐ Remember Me

[Log In](#)

Connect with Us



Recent Posts

- [Civil Literacy Should Be on the Pence Agenda](#)
- [Government Rules Trump Beliefs of Indiana Company](#)
- [Bohanon: 'Water, Diamonds — the Value of College Majors'](#)
- [The Outstater: Policy Discussion Without the Discussion](#)

* school teachers are expecting them to compose. Middle-school teachers are being compelled by their grade-level standards to ask their students to do something for which the students will have to use their imaginations.

Do elementary and middle-school teachers need this problem spelled out for them? Yes, I also discovered in talking to several of the teachers at this event. They apparently knew nothing about the research on — and value of — prose models, a well-known body of research just a few decades ago.

This raises a common-sense question: How can middle-grade children be expected to understand how to set forth a "claim" and provide "relevant evidence" to support it if they haven't been taught (and won't be taught) how to identify an academic argument, a claim and irrelevant evidence in what they have read? No wonder New York City teachers are spending an enormous amount of time creating worksheets to structure students' writing, and their students are spending an enormous amount of time filling these worksheets in.

One teacher, for example, admitted spending a lot of time trying to help her students come up with a topic sentence (it is close to a "claim" but is also not mentioned in Common Core's reading or writing standards). And her worksheets showed the dutiful efforts of a few children to do this. A topic sentence doesn't come easy to many middle-school students, especially if they haven't read a lot of well-written articles with topic sentences that the children have been asked to identify until they really know what one is and what one does for the rest of the paragraph.

Two other teachers had first assigned some short stories (maybe to engage their students?) before asking their students to come up with a "thesis" or a "claim" and produce "evidence" for it. Needless to say, the children's writing didn't show a "claim." Not surprising. The only prose models the children had been given were two- to three-page stories.

But some teachers were forging ahead despite the conceptual difficulties their students were encountering. Another teacher, for example, acknowledged the lack of a visible "literary thesis" or "claim" in her middle-school students' writing (most were not strong students). She was pleased they were learning to cite page numbers for the location of their "evidence," even though their "thesis" or "claim" had to be "inferred."

The problem deepened when I examined another writing standard for middle school. Common Core's architects did suspect that writing was related to reading. They just didn't know how it was. The ninth writing standard for grades six, seven and eight asks students to apply grades six, seven and eight reading standards as they "draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research."

What are these reading standards? Here are the first two:

1. "Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text."
2. "Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text."

The problem here is that the reading standards are almost identical in grades six, seven and eight for both literature and informational text. It seems that children are also being expected to analyze literary and non-literary texts as if they are both genres of expository prose. No well-trained English teacher would expect children reading a short story or novella in grade six to figure out first its "theme" and then "analyze its development over the course of the text." That's something one would do with children with a controlling idea in the introductory paragraph of an informational piece. The architects of these standards don't seem to have a firm grasp on the differences between literature and informational texts.

Years ago, it was common practice for English teachers to introduce students to the art of the essay in grade nine. Now students in grade six are to attempt composing an essay with a thesis or a claim. One New York City teacher saw this as a healthy "challenge" for her weak students. Others might see this challenge as a Utopian expectation, with teachers the ultimate scapegoat.

Some children, already strong readers, are, of course, going to get it. Their English teachers will eventually figure the problems out, or their parents will. But guess which children are going to be the most confused? Probably the least able readers and writers, the very ones Common Core wants to make "college-ready."

It's time for the standards that the National Governors Association and the Council for Chief School State Officers have copyrighted to be drastically revised. The problem here is: Who is to do the revisions? And what should Indiana be doing while the legal issues get sorted

WELCOME NEW SUBSCRIBERS!!

- [Indiana Eco-Devo: Progress with Transparency](#)

Join Our Mailing List

First Name :
 Last Name :
 Email Address :

Subscribe to Blog via Email

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Join 9 other subscribers

Email Address